

PAWTUCKET SCHOOL COMMITTEE WORK SESSION

Tuesday, April 26, 2016 at 6:30 PM

School Administration Building, 2nd Floor Conference Room

286 Main Street, Pawtucket, RI 02860

Minutes

I. Meeting will come to order

The Chairman, Mr. Charbonneau, called the work session to order at 6:34 PM.

a. Roll call

Mr. Araujo-here; Ms. Bonollo-here; Ms. Dube-here; Mr. Knight-here; Ms. McQuade-here; Mr. Charbonneau-here

Also in attendance were Mrs. Patricia DiCenso, Superintendent of Schools; Ms. Lee Rabbitt, Assistant Superintendent of Schools; Ms. Melissa Devine, Chief Financial Officer and Mr. Hersh Cristino, Chief Information and Innovation Officer.

The Chairman commented that Ms. Grant is on the Advisory Board for the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) and will join us, if available, later in the evening and expressed her confidence in this Committee to continue their good work.

b. Pledge of Allegiance

The Chairman, Mr. Charbonneau, led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. Public Participation

Comments from the public are invited at this time. Persons wishing to speak should sign in with the Committee Chair before speaking. The Committee is precluded from discussing or acting on items raised by Public Comment which are not already on the agenda. Public comment will be included in the minutes of the meeting. None.

III. Approval of previous meeting minutes, 4/12/16 and 4/14/16

Mr. Araujo moved to approve the previous meeting minutes, 4/12/16 and 4/14/16 as one agenda item. Ms. Bonollo seconded.

Voice vote carries with six members present.

IV. Old Business/Action Item

a. School Committee Policies 2nd Passage

• IJJ—Selection of Instructional Material

Ms. Dube: School Committee Policy IJJ—Selection of Instructional Material, we took your advice from the last meeting to start over and

remove previous policy. There was no actual discussion but the Superintendent brought to our attention that we need to change language used in two places. It is bolded and crossed through the next session because it is already specified in previous paragraph.

Ms. McQuade moved to approve the 2nd passage of School Committee Policy IJJ—Selection of Instructional Material. Ms. Bonollo seconded.

Mr. Knight: Because this has been substantially amended, doesn't it have to go back to a first passage?

Mrs. DiCenso: I don't think it's substantial. It's the language we use when we negotiate so it's really not something we drastically use.

Mr. Knight: Is there anything being amended about the language? There's a bunch of stuff at the State House.

Mr. Charbonneau: It's specific to our contract language for the time being. What has been struck and added is very similar in language that satisfies our agreement.

Mrs. DiCenso: We can't arbitrarily sit through curriculum. This is making sure practitioners are sitting in with us when we make the decision. We fall under the umbrella with the state. This is more of a safeguard so we're not cherry picking.

Ms. Bonollo: There's only one committee? It should say this committee.

Ms. Dube: I think it reflects that it's not the same committee every time.

Mrs. DiCenso: It depends on the contract.

Roll call

Mr. Araujo-yes; Ms. Bonollo-yes; Ms. Dube-yes; Mr. Knight-yes; Ms. McQuade-yes; Mr. Charbonneau-yes

Motion carries with six members present.

V. New Business Discussion/Action Items

a. School Committee Gun Resolution

Mr. Araujo: I am presenting what RIASC passed for gun free schools as similarly passed last year and we want to support the General Assembly. I agree with the executive board passing this.

Mr. Araujo moved to approve the Pawtucket School Committee

Resolution on Gun Free Schools. Ms. Dube seconded.

Mr. Knight: Has that passed?

Mr. Araujo: I believe it went up today. The executive board passed it. This is the first time we got it to the agenda. It could get kicked down.

Roll call

Mr. Araujo-yes; Ms. Bonollo-yes; Ms. Dube-yes; Mr. Knight-yes; Ms. McQuade-yes; Mr. Charbonneau-yes

Motion carries with six members present.

b. Budget Transfer(s)

Mrs. DiCenso: There is a significant transfer in the IT Department. We have a boatload of e-rate money which we want to use for the 1-1 initiative.

Mr. Cristino: We get \$.85 on the dollar usually due to infrastructure hardware. What happened was at the same time doing it we submitted to the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) for the 1-1 initiative to ask for wireless money for St. Leo's and were waiting for the answer. If it didn't get there at that time, we wouldn't be able

to do it at this time.

Roll call

Mr. Araujo-yes; Ms. Bonollo-yes; Ms. Dube-yes; Mr. Knight-yes; Ms. McQuade-yes; Mr. Charbonneau-yes

Motion carries with six members present.

c. Out of State Field Trips

- Tolman high School to URI Smile Challenge Weekend, Kingston RI 4/29/16 to 4/30/16**
- JMW to Lake Compounce, Bristol CT on 6/3/16-87 students; 6-8 chaperones**
- JMW to Fogg Art Museum, Boston MA on 5/12/16—29 students; 4 chaperones**
- JMW to Fogg Art Museum, Boston MA on 5/11/16—23 students; 3 chaperones**

Mrs. DiCenso: The first trip is in state, however, overnight. It is an annual event sponsored by COZ and what is not listed here is that there will be two chaperones, one each for less than twelve students.

Mr. Araujo moved to approve all out of state field trips Tolman high School to URI Smile Challenge Weekend, Kingston RI 4/29/16 to 4/30/16; JMW to Lake Compounce, Bristol CT on 6/3/16-87 students;

6-8 chaperones; JMW to Fogg Art Museum, Boston MA on 5/12/16—29 students; 4 chaperones; JMW to Fogg Art Museum, Boston MA on 5/11/16—23 students; 3 chaperones. Mr. Knight seconded.

Voice vote carries with six members present.

d. School Committee Policies 1st Passage

- **IKC—Rank-In-Class**

Ms. Dube: IKC—Rank In Class, this is a policy that got tabled for a while. It affects high school students only. We didn't change a tone; we made it easier to understand. A chart with weighted gray scale is an easier way to show the scale. We thought this chart and explanation would be easier to understand. The first change is to say when things are calculated. The second is classes for credit will be used to determine class rank. The "x" through is based on what was added by legal counsel and Superintendent at the top. It will take effect with the class of 2020.

Mr. Araujo: Looking at doing a full four year cycle?

Ms. Dube: Yes, legal said we couldn't do this in the middle for juniors. We had assurances computers can calculate multiple different grades.

Ms. McQuade moved to approve the first passage of School Committee Policy, IKC—Rank-In-Class. Ms. Bonollo seconded.

Mr. Knight: I don't see a price for credit recovery.

Ms. Dube: That's covered in the credit recovery policy.

Mr. Knight: Did you run that back by Mr. Anderson where Cumberland can't charge for summer school?

Ms. Dube: That is just pertaining to class rank.

Ms. Dube moved to amend to course recovery, not credit recovery.

Mr. Knight seconded.

Mrs. DiCenso: The Commissioner is looking for a waiver this year so districts on schedule. I'd like to bring it back next year. I don't know if the waiver will go through.

Ms. Dube: We will be looking at that policy after the General Assembly is finished.

Mrs. DiCenso: You only have the junior high.

Mr. Charbonneau: How does this affect someone who transfers in from another district?

Ms. Dube: Grades transferred from other schools will not be included in calculating class rank, but we were advised by legal to take that out.

Mrs. DiCenso: It's emotional for people who have been here for four years and someone comes in and becomes valedictorian. Minor children can't be held harmless for the family's need to move but you have to be very careful that student can't be held harmless because they have to come here.

Roll call on amendment

Mr. Araujo-yes; Ms. Bonollo-yes; Ms. Dube-yes; Mr. Knight-yes; Ms. McQuade-yes; Mr. Charbonneau-yes

Motion carries with six members present.

Roll call on original motion as amended

Mr. Araujo-yes; Ms. Bonollo-yes; Ms. Dube-yes; Mr. Knight-yes; Ms. McQuade-yes; Mr. Charbonneau-yes

Motion carries with six members present.

- **EEA—Student Transportation**

Ms. Dube: The transportation policy currently bus grades kindergarten through grades six at .75 radial mile but grade six is mostly housed at the middle schools. We also have 400 plus exceptions causing us to hand write in the system. Non special education student that is not being changed at all. That is determined by law. We have been looking at this to use the same amount of buses, the same amount of money. We need to create a policy with no exception now and propose a three quarter walking distance for elementary. Then middle grades six through eight we bus at one mile walking distance. We also looked at an “opt out” policy but send out a form to the parent so we can make it clear the student will not ride. Only 20% of the sixth graders eligible currently ride. We ask the parents to register students who want to ride the bus. One addition is school bus stops. We can be better efficient at making better bus stops. Most districts have a range to walk to a bus stop. WE used what our bus company advised.

Ms. Devine: Without knowing exact numbers the estimated cost of a bus is \$77,000.00. It could be substantial once it’s determined how many are eligible. There are a bunch of other factors and they’re at the point where they have to make their own assumptions. We need to have one more phone call and we don’t know what the outcome will be.

Mrs. DiCenso: They said with the fleet we have now we are able to accommodate kindergarten through grade five now. It's so problematic because grade six was promised and we have Potter Burns moving to the Annex and there are two areas of drop off that cause congestion and deep concerns from the City Council. I have a concern with the unknown. I think it's difficult.

Exceptions. There are no such things as exceptions, like a sexual assault of an adult with a child and the child having to walk past that home. Although I applaud about the strict rules of .75, we want to get this out there before school ends and want to be clear this is the policy for every kid. I don't want to come to the Committee on a very social, emotional or physical matter. They do happen and we are sensitive to do this. Adhering to policy is critical before this school year ends.

Ms. Dube: We need to look at this and see which direction you want to take it in. We already have Potter and Greene, do we include all?

Mr. Araujo moved to approve the first passage of School Committee Policy EEA-Student Transportation. Ms. Bonollo seconded.

Mr. Araujo: I applaud the Committee for doing this. I would love to bus every child. My deep concern is the cost if we bus every student we're looking at \$9M? We're considering looking at a budget with

considerable money. I can't see doing that. Then Nathanael Greene next year. I think one we open it up to every junior high, I'm looking at the cost. It's going to be a big cost. I'm really concerned about that. Moving forward with the positive one to one initiative, I don't know if we can take away from that for busing.

Mrs. DiCenso: Twenty one hundred in the junior highs.

Ms. Dube: You have 400 exceptions riding right now.

Mrs. DiCenso: Thirteen buses potentially. We thought we were going to get different news back. We budgeted with little room. My worry is that on the bus company end, we don't even have a fleet to do the middle end and I have concerns about that.

Ms. Devine: I think they're only using 70%.

Mrs. DiCenso: It's the information from the bus company and it's going to impact the fleet.

Mr. Araujo: Once you put the policy in place, now I can have my child bused. Once in place we can hope for 20% but get 40% or 50%. Our budget is so packed right now.

Ms. Bonollo: How under-utilized are they serving the elementary?

Ms. Dube: We found one bus doing a forty minute run in the morning and afternoon. We looked at ridership and expectation; how can we take the same fleet and same amount of money? If we change the building principals responsible that's being removed. We have one school at 120% every kid plus 20 more so it's making our numbers bonkers.

Mrs. DiCenso: When we sit and logically talk about 400 exceptions, we're thinking we can fit in the middle school and they came back and said your fleet can handle kindergarten through grade five only.

Ms. Bonollo: We need to determine if we have junior high schools or middle schools. If middle schools, we have to take grades six to eight or junior high we have to make a determination if they're junior high or middle. Are the sixth grade a permanent fixture there? That will cover a lot of things too. But if junior high, the sixth grade is part of the elementary and treat as such.

Mrs. DiCenso: Clearly we're moving to a middle model. Before I got here someone purchased pretty signs that say middle school. We have the capacity to house them there. They're not being housed as before. They're part of the schedule and culture. They are not a separate sixth grade. We still have sixth grade we have not moved yet. Greene and Varieur by the end of 2018 we plan to have them moved out.

Mrs. Cylke told parents she would provide busing for students in the sixth grade. The whole idea is to provide more service. I would hate to lose sixth grades.

Ms. Bonollo: Are Potter and Goff on the same time schedule?

Mrs. DiCenso: In terms of busing?

Mrs. DiCenso: We made adjustments to be more flexible with start times.

Mr. Knight: How many school bus stops do we have?

Mrs. DiCenso: It's the cost of multiplying stops.

Mrs. DiCenso: Plan for vendor is their bus stop is using entire fleet.

Mr. Knight: It doesn't make any sense.

Ms. Devine: If doing less stops boundary change. They're working on that.

Mrs. DiCenso: We know there's 400 too many.

Mr. Knight: We've got all these extra stops. The company was supposed to give us a plan with logic and I've seen crazy stuff.

Mrs. DiCenso: This Committee was asked to come up with a plan for a kindergarten through grade five model.

Mr. Knight moved to table the first passage of School Committee Policy EEA-Student Transportation. Ms. Bonollo seconded.

Roll call

Mr. Araujo-no; Ms. Bonollo-yes; Ms. Dube-no; Mr. Knight-yes; Ms. McQuade-no; Mr. Charbonneau-no

Motion to table fails, four opposed; two in favor.

Ms. McQuade: In talking with the bus company when we say exceptions it's not just little people riding the bus. We have kids going to every school from every area. It sound logical.

Ms. Grant arrived at 7:25 PM.

Ms. McQuade: They're called depot stops. The problem is we've got layers of exceptions. Children who opted to go to non-neighborhood schools. Student observed neighbor three houses away to get it and student riding and just got on but bus children are getting door service. The purpose to have something functional we have got to have something to communicate with the Bus Company and families

while we still have the summer to plan. It's an unworkable system as we have it.

Mrs. DiCenso: We don't have door to door service. We have 25% of students coming in after school starts. ELL, reading, OT services that is the biggest disruption. It's more difficult with certain schools. This district is extremely lacking in providing busing for kids. I don't have requests unless it's extremely dangerous. I can't predict November today. Where families will end up moving to. It's not the kids fault the mother doesn't have a car. There is no clear answer. If we were Cranston or North Kingstown, we could bus every kid. We're trying to expand service. When the bus company says we're busing across districts, it's part of one reality but not optimal. Our goal is we have to have a plan for middle schools. I do think I'd want to it amended to at least push elementary through.

Ms. McQuade: One other thing, put Superintendent has the discretion to make changes.

Ms. Dube: I agree with Superintendent DiCenso and feel we need to use this time to move this policy. We need some direction from the Committee. We can't continue to operate like this.

1. Elementary at walking distance
2. Bus middle school at one mile walking distance
3. Language about bus stop changes

4. Language who has say who gets on buses

If we could do that, we could move faster.

Mr. Knight: I propose the Superintendent to do it.

Mr. Charbonneau: To Ms. Dube's point, why don't we take it bit by bit and construct the policy around that?

Ms. Bonollo: I like the three quarter walking distance and one mile. They didn't make exclusions in my day and have Superintendent making all exceptions.

Mr. Charbonneau: Is there a sense to stay with the walking distance?

Mr. Araujo: What is the cost differential?

Ms. Devine: There is a cost differential with the walk distance.

Mr. Charbonneau: We're looking at building a policy and cost.

Mr. Araujo: As we're dealing with Annex and busing I am hesitant to change for their two years due to higher cost. I now we're going to have more expenses.

Mrs. DiCenso: For the life in Pawtucket, it's always been walking

distance, they changed it.

Ms. Devine: It's radial distance.

Mr. Knight: We're supposed to provide simple transportation for grades kindergarten through grade six.

Ms. Dube: The law says suitable transportation.

Mr. Knight: This is not going to be the final process.

Mrs. DiCenso: We don't know that we haven't received data from the bus company.

Mr. Charbonneau: Have we looked at all options with our vendor?

Ms. Dube: We looked at every bus and ridership. There are buses with gaps of about an hour. We have about eight extra buses they could be busing middle schools. We looked at asking them how we can move efficiently using the buses we have.

Ms. Devine: It's a couple of our own buses.

Mrs. DiCenso: It's impossible to bring back Davies bus right away.

Mr. Knight: Now you have information. That would have been

helpful, if we all had it. I think taking out middle school completely is the way to go or leave middle in pending further information. I would leave it in one way.

Ms. Bonollo: What if we went with just elementary including sixth grade?

Mrs. DiCenso: Not according to our curriculum and the way we are running it. We classify at RIDE as sixth grade.

Mr. Beaupre: We had the sixth grade housed at middle schools but treated as elementary sixth grade. When Superintendent Cylke was here we made sure they went in as sixth grade and teacher stays with students. Teachers had to go through bidding process.

Ms. Dube: We need some direction. Walking distance .75 or radial distance?

Consensus: Walking

Ms. Dube: Grade six, seven and eight or none?

Ms. Bonollo: None at the middle. Leave it at elementary and if we find out through process that we have a lot of buses, we can re-visit and change.

Mr. Charbonneau: I think we start talk and work down. Start with middle then back out. Start with everything and make cuts as we need to.

Mr. Knight: I agree with you, Mr. Charbonneau. I think asking Policy Committee to not continue if we plan at least have plan involved.

Mrs. DiCenso: If we approve the first read, we can re-visit.

Ms. Dube: We're going to have a policy meeting between this meeting and our next meeting. I'm hearing you want us to continue to look at middle at one walk mile.

Mr. Charbonneau: If they're doing that, why would we stop them?

Ms. Dube: Language about Superintendent should be in the process.

Mr. Knight: Are we going to have an appeal process?

Mrs. DiCenso: They will appeal to RIDE.

Mr. Knight: Appeal process has to be in here somewhere.

Ms. Dube: At the bottom of the policy I will change that Superintendent is responsible.

Ms. Bonollo: Is the Superintendent going to have the time to do it?

Ms. Dube: Or designee?

Ms. Dube: .75 walk mile?

Mr. Knight: Half mile and one quarter mile.

Ms. McQuade: I like keeping it at .25.

Ms. Devine: I only have to be half mile from a bus where a child has to walk three quarter mile?

Ms. Dube: Someone is walking to a school, not a bus stop.

Mrs. DiCenso: As a parent of a 9 year old and walking to the Attleboro line to get a bus is un-nerving.

Mr. Knight: Leaving it at three quarter mile you're going to have exactly what you are talking about. Make it safer for kids. It's not providing service, we provide at minimal. Some of these kids should not be walking alone.

Ms. McQuade: Rural districts have huge walk distances. We are already more generous than other urban districts. We wanted to bus every child. We can't triple our transportation costs. We're not

hearing huge clamoring with distance for the walk to the bus. We're trying to balance both.

Ms. Dube: I pulled policies from similar sizes Lowell, etc. We do have a generous policy. We found one close to us at .75. I think keeping elementary with where they are and not withdrawing services. If we change policy without change, much of what First Student is doing.

Ms. Bonollo: I like .5 to bus stop.

Mr. Charbonneau: We're always comparing our district. Let's do the best for our children. We shouldn't be content saying we're more generous than Lowell.

Mr. Knight: I don't consider it being more generous. I hit Prospect Street every morning at 8:00 AM heading to downtown Pawtucket area. There are approximately twenty kids getting a bus between 8:00 AM – 8:07 AM every day. It's dangerous, but that's a different issue.

My amendment would be for .5 mile.

Mrs. DiCenso: Walking is not a bad thing for kids. What we're trying to work on is trying to walk kids safely to school. I worry about kids walking when it snows, I don't think it's bad for them. We have to provide a safe way for them to get to schools. There is a proposal to

get PTO's to help organize safe walks at .75.

Ms. Bonollo: So if moving into safe walk, you are going to vet all the parents standing there?

Mrs. DiCenso: Of course. We do with all of our parents.

Ms. Dube: So bus stop amend to .5 and add Superintendent responsible or designee?

Mr. Araujo moved to amend motion to include stop range for students is a walking range of .5 miles and amend last section to include Superintendent or designee is responsible. Ms. Bonollo seconded.

Roll call on amendment

Mr. Araujo-yes; Ms. Bonollo-yes; Ms. Dube-yes; Ms. Grant-abstain; Mr. Knight-yes; Ms. McQuade-yes; Mr. Charbonneau-yes

Motion carries.

Mr. Araujo moved to approve the first passage of School Committee Policy EEA-Student Transportation as amended. Ms. Bonollo and Mr. Knight seconded.

Roll call

Mr. Araujo-yes; Ms. Bonollo-yes; Ms. Dube-yes; Ms. Grant-abstain; Mr. Knight interrupted the vote to advise Ms. Grant that an abstention is the same as a recusal and must complete and submit the RI Ethics Recusal Form. Ms. Grant did not want to vote because she was not present for the entire discussion and changed her vote to pass. Ms. McQuade-yes; Mr. Charbonneau-yes

Motion carries.

VI. Adjournment

Mr. Araujo moved to adjourn. Ms. Bonollo seconded.

Voice vote carries all in favor.

The Chairman, Mr. Charbonneau, adjourned the Work Session of the Pawtucket School Committee on Tuesday, April 26, 2016 at 8:08 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Clerk

Approved 5/10/16